

027A

CONFRONT 10-26

1ST ADD DAY LD CONFRONT WASHINGTON 026A XXX WAR.

THE ARMOR THE SOVIETS HAD SUPPLIED THEM IN MASSIVE QUANTITIES HAD GIVEN THEM AN APPARENT EDGE ON THE GROUND. MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, PERHAPS, THEIR ARMIES HAD PROVED ABLE TO STAND AND FIGHT, INSTEAD OF RUNNING AWAY AS THEY HAD DONE SIX YEARS BEFORE.

"AT THAT POINT, ON SATURDAY, OCT. 13," KISSINGER SAID THURSDAY, "THE PRESIDENT DECIDED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE TO START A RESUPPLY EFFORT OF ITS OWN, AND THE UNITED STATES, FROM THAT TIME ON, HAS ENGAGED IN MAINTAINING THE MILITARY BALANCE... IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WE HAD SOUGHT."

THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID ON OCT. 14 THE UNITED STATES HAD CONCLUDED NEITHER SIDE WANTED TO QUIT AND ITS ONLY RECOURSE WAS TO WAIT A FEW DAYS. AFTER THE EGYPTIAN SINAI OFFENSIVE HAD RUN ITS COURSE, THE UNITED STATES COULD TRY AGAIN.

THOUGH U.S. OFFICIALS GAVE NO HINT OF IT, THEY MUST HAVE HAD SOME IDEA WHAT WAS COMING. THE ISRAELIS, HAVING MADE A GOOD DEAL OF NOISE ABOUT THE FACT THAT, IN MOSHE DAYAN'S WORDS, "THE ROAD THAT LEADS FROM DAMASCUS TO TEL AVIV IS THE SAME ROAD THAT LEADS FROM TEL AVIV TO DAMASCUS," HAD PUSHED 20 MILES INTO SYRIA AND THEN STOPPED. THEY HAD SECURED THE NORTHERN BORDER, AND NOW WERE PREPARING TO "BREAK SOME BONES" ON THE SINAI FRONT.

ON THE 15TH U.S. PLANES STARTED FLYING AMMUNITION, SPARE PARTS AND ULTIMATELY TANKS AND PLANES TO ISRAEL. "CONCURRENTLY," SAID KISSINGER, "WE INFORMED THE SOVIET UNION THAT OUR INTEREST IN WORKING OUT AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION STILL REMAINED VERY STRONG." ON THE 16TH A SMALL ISRAELI FORCE DROVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE TWO ARMIES ON THE EAST BANK OF THE SUEZ AND PUNCHED ACROSS THE WATERWAY INTO EGYPT PROPER.

THOUGH THE EGYPTIANS TRIED TO MINIMIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSSING, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE RUSSIANS SAW THE DANGER INSTANTLY. THE ISRAELI FORCE GREY IN A MATTER OF DAYS FROM A FEW TANKS AND A HANDFUL OF MEN, TO THE SIZE OF A FULL ARMORED DIVISION--300 TANKS AND 12,000 TROPS. IT QUICKLY SEIZED SEVERAL HUNDRED SQUARE MILES, KNOCKED OUT MANY MISSILE SITES AND CAPTURED OTHERS, AND SPREAD NORTH AND SOUTH TO SEIZE THE EGYPTIAN SUPPLY ROADS UP FROM CAIRO.

ON THE 17TH A WORRIED SOVIET PREMIER ALEXEI KOSYGIN HASTILY FLEW TO CAIRO TO SEE PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT. EVEN AS THEY TALKED, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE ISRAELIS AT BEST WERE CLEARING A PATH THROUGH THE SUEZ MISSILE BELT FOR THEIR PLANES. AT WORST, THEY MIGHT TRAP THE ENTIRE EGYPTIAN ARMY EAST OF SUEZ.

ON THE 18TH, WITH AN ISRAELI VICTORY OF IMMENSE PROPORTIONS IN SIGHT, KISSINGER PUBLICLY CALLED FOR A STANDSTILL CEASE-FIRE AND IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE WARRING PARTIES ON A PERMANENT MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

THIS PLAN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN CALCULATED TO DO TWO THINGS: SAVE TH
ARABS FROM A LOSS OF FACE. ISRAELIS THE DIRECT
No Objection to Declassification in Full 2010/08/03 : LOC-HAK-189-2-7-3

AS SEVERAL U.S. OFFICIALS MADE PLAIN THEN AND AFTER, THE ARABS
COULD NOT AFFORD TO LOSE FACE AS THEY HAD IN 1967 AND STILL
NEGOTIATE. NOR COULD THE SOVIETS AFFORD TO LET IT HAPPEN TO THEM, IF
THEY EXPECTED TO RETAIN THE DIPLOMATIC BASE THEY HAD WORKED SO HARD
TO ACQUIRE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THUS SOVIET INTERESTS HAD BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED--AND WITH THEM,
A POSSIBLE NEED FOR DIRECT MILITARY ACTION TO STAVE OFF DISASTER.
KOSYGIN RETURNED TO MOSCOW ON OCT. 19, BEARING THE BAD TIDINGS
FROM THE WAR FRONT. WITHIN HOURS SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY CHAIRMAN
LEONID BREZHNEV DASHED OFF AN URGENT MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON: SEND
KISSINGER AT ONCE TO DISCUSS THE BASIS WITH US FOR A MIDDLE EAST
SETTLEMENT. KISSINGER BARELY STOPPED TO PACK HIS TOOTHBRUSH BEFORE
BOARDING AN AIR FORCE JET ON THE 20TH.

IN TWO DAYS OF FRANTIC NEGOTIATING, KISSINGER AND THE RUSSIANS
HAMMERED OUT "A FORMULA WHICH WE BELIEVE WAS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL OF THE
PARTIES AND WHICH WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE REPRESENTED A JUST SOLUTION
TO THIS TRAGIC CONFLICT." THE FORMULA WAS SIMPLE:

--A STANDSTILL CEASEFIRE EFFECTIVE TUESDAY, BEFORE THE ISRAELIS
COULD CUT THE LAST SUPPLY LINKS TO THE EGYPTIAN ARMIES ON THE EAST
BANK.

--IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 OF NOVEMBER,
1967, WHICH CALLED FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

--A RENEWED CALL FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS ON A GENERAL MIDEAST
SETTLEMENT.

THE PROBLEMS THAT LED TO THURSDAY'S CRISIS AROSE FROM THE
DIFFICULTY OF PUTTING THE FORMULA INTO EFFECT. THE PROPOSAL WAS
ACCEPTED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY OCT. 22. THE CEASEFIRE WAS
TO TAKE EFFECT ON TUESDAY MORNING.

FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER--THE TRUTH WILL PROBABLY ALWAYS BE
SHROUDED IN CONFLICTING CLAIMS--NEITHER SIDE QUIT FIRING. THOUGH THE
ISRAELIS STOOD STILL FOR SOME HOURS, ULTIMATELY THEY BEGAN TO MOVE
AGAIN. PUSHING SOUTH, THEY SEIZED THE ROAD AND RAIL LINES LEADING TO
PORT SUEZ, MAIN SUPPLY POINT FOR THE EGYPTIAN 3RD ARMY, TUESDAY NIGHT
AND SURROUNDED THE TOWN ITSELF ON WEDNESDAY.

THOUGH KISSINGER MADE ONLY VEILED REFERENCES TO IT IN HIS NEWS
CONFERENCE THURSDAY, IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE FATE OF THE 3RD ARMY,
THAT BROUGHT THE RUSSIANS CLOSE TO THE POINT OF DIRECT
INTERVENTION--AND THE DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE AMERICANS THAT
BOTH SIDES HAD SO LONG SOUGHT TO AVOID.

MORE

UPI 10-26 03:25 AED

Q 8A

CONFRONT 10-26

2ND ADD DAY LD CONFRONT WASHINGTON 026A XXX AVOID.

WITH THE EGYPTIANS BEGINNING TO SURRENDER BECAUSE THEIR FOOD AND WATER HAD BEEN CUT OFF, THE RUSSIANS SEEM TO HAVE BECOME CONVINCED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THE WAR SHORT OF ABSOLUTE DESTRUCTION OF THE 3RD ARMY WAS FOR THE TWO BIG POWERS TO JOINTLY INTERVENE WITH ENOUGH FORCE TO SEPARATE THE WARRING ARMIES.

THE DRAMA OF CONFRONTATION OVER THIS PROPOSAL BEGAN VERY LATE WEDNESDAY. INDEED, UP TO 5 P.M. WHEN KISSINGER AND DOBRYNIN HAD THEIR FIRST MEETING, THE MAIN SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WAS, BY THE SECRETARY'S OWN ACCOUNT, "PRELIMINARY TALKS...ABOUT THE SITE, PARTICIPATION AND PROCEDURE" FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT WERE TO FOLLOW THE CEASEFIRE.

THE FIRST SIGN THAT SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG CAME SOMETIME AFTER 10 P.M. WEDNESDAY, WHEN DOBRYNIN CALLED KISSINGER TO SAY A NEW MESSAGE HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM MOSCOW. THE RUSSIAN SENT IT TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

THOUGH KISSINGER DID NOT DIRECTLY SAY WHAT WAS IN THE MESSAGE, HE DID REVEAL THAT IT CONTAINED FOR THE FIRST TIME A RUSSIAN PROPOSAL FOR DIRECT, JOINT INTERVENTION TO ENFORCE THE CEASE-FIRE. THE KEY POINT OF THE RUSSIAN POSITION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE COMPLAINT ABOUT WHAT KISSINGER EUPHEMISTICALLY CALLED "CERTAIN ISRAELI TERRITORIAL GAINS" -- THE CUTOFF OF THE 3RD ARMY.

THOUGH KISSINGER WAS NOT CLEAR ON THE POINT, HE INDICATED IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION THAT THE RUSSIANS RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT IF THE UNITED STATES DID NOT AGREE TO INTERVENE TO SAVE THE 3RD ARMY, THE SOVIETS MIGHT HAVE TO DO SO UNILATERALLY.

KISSINGER CONSIDERED A JOINT INTERVENTION OUT OF THE QUESTION. "IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE FORCES OF THE GREAT POWERS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE NUMBERS THAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO OVERPOWER BOTH OF THE PARTICIPANTS. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT WE SHOULD TRANSPLANT GREAT POWER RIVALRY INTO THE MIDDLE EAST OR ALTERNATIVELY THAT WE SHOULD IMPOSE A MILITARY CONDOMINIUM BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION," HE SAID THURSDAY.

INTELLIGENCE AGENCY DIRECTOR TO A MIDNIGHT MEETING IN
AN NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION IN FULL 2010/08/03 : LOC-HAK-189-2-7-3 KISSINGER CALLED
BEFORE OR DURING THE MEETING THE UNITED STATES PICKED UP
INTELLIGENCE--PRESUMABLY VIA RADIO MONITORS--OF THE
"CERTAIN READINESS MEASURES... THAT CAUSED THE PRESIDENT... TO ORDER
CERTAIN PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES."
KISSINGER STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES ON THURSDAY THAT THERE HAD BEEN
NO ACTUAL RUSSIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS. "THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT YET
TAKEN ANY IRREVOCABLE ACTION," HE SAID. "WE ARE NOT TALKING OF
THREATS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. WE ARE NOT TALKING
OF A MISSILE CRISIS TYPE OF SITUATION."
BUT IT WAS ALSO CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS HAD INDICATED THEY MIGHT
TAKE SOME ACTION AND THE U.S. MILITARY HAD BEEN ALERTED--PARTLY TO
COPE WITH IT, AND PARTLY TO SIGNAL THE RUSSIANS THAT KISSINGER WAS
ABSOLUTELY SERIOUS WHEN HE SAID "THE UNITED STATES IS EVEN MORE
OPPOSED TO THE UNILATERAL INTRODUCTION BY ANY GREAT POWER, ESPECIALLY
BY ANY NUCLEAR POWER, OF MILITARY FORCES INTO THE MIDDLE EAST IN
WHATEVER GUISE THOSE FORCES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED."
AT THE SAME TIME, KISSINGER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE UNITED STATES
HAD RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTING AN UTTER DISASTER TO THE
EGYPTIAN 3RD ARMY. HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO NOTE THAT "HUMANITARIAN
SUPPLIES" -- PRESUMABLY, FOOD, WATER AND MEDICINES--HAD REACHED THE
3RD ARMY DURING THE DAY. THOUGH HE DIDN'T SAY IT, THE SUPPLIES WOULD
ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE HAD TO COME THROUGH ISRAELI LINES.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, KISSINGER PROPOSED AN ALTERNATIVE FORMULA TO
ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION OF THE
CEASE-FIRE--THROUGH GREAT POWER TRUCE OBSERVERS AND SMALL POWER
PEACEKEEPING FORCES--THAT NEATLY PRESENTED THE RUSSIANS WITH A Viable
AND FACE-SAVING WAY OUT OF THE TRAP.
BY LATE AFTERNOON, THE RUSSIANS HAD ACCEPTED THE DEAL, AND THE
MIDDLE EAST CRISIS SEEMED ON THE ROAD TO A SETTLEMENT.
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